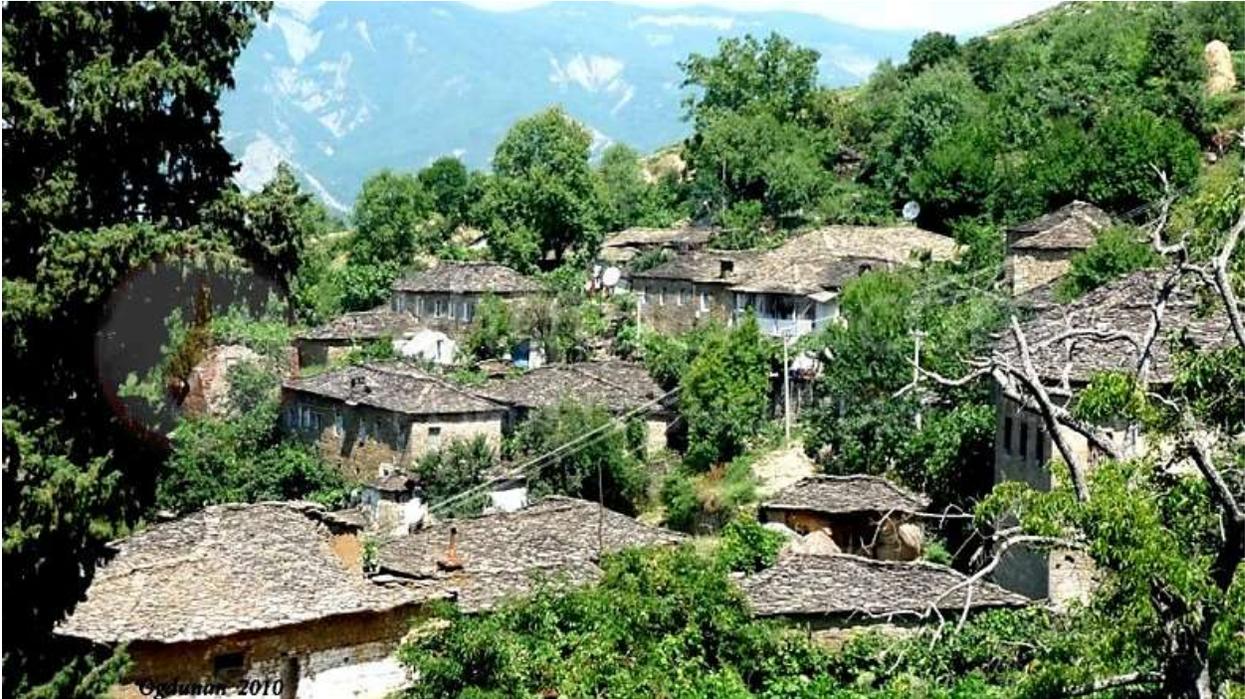


1.

## Permet - Petran – Lipivan – Ogdunan

From the Vjosa River to our First Glass of Raki



⇔ 10 km | ▲ 900 m | ▼ 475 m | ⚡ 5:15 h

From Permet we drive along the very much raftable, turquoise waters of the Vjosa, one of Europe’s last wild rivers, to the small village Petran. Our warm-up walk follows a donkey path still in use by the from Lipivan where can stop of coffee. Ascending to today’s highpoint on above 800 meters, we enjoy the panorama over the Vjosa Valley and look in awe at the sheer 750 m north face of Mt. Nemercka. Passing the highest point, a new view opens, we catch a first glimpse of our destination Ogdun, the Fir of Hotova National Park and Mt. Gramos, the highest peak of Southern Albania, in the distance. In the village Entala and Tori already expect us with open arms, a glass or raki and gliko, a sweet delicacy from the region. In the afternoon we can further explore the traditional stone village or relax in the garden learning more about our hosts.



## 2. Ogdunan – Benje – Novosele – Lupcke – Kosove

Ottoman Bridges, Warm Thermal Springs and Semi-Deserted Villages



⇔ 15 km | ▲ 1125 m | ▼ 800 m | ⚡ 7:15 h

Descending towards the mighty Lengarica Canyon we soon reach an elegant Ottoman stone bridge and the famous thermal springs of Benja. Their warm Sulphur waters are said to have curating effects and arriving there before the crowds we can hopefully enjoy them all to ourselves. Revitalized we continue through farmland to the much less visited village itself, visit an impressive Orthodox church and local family who shares stories with us. On our way we pass two more almost deserted villages: In Novosele only a single family remains, while in Lupcke former inhabitants started to rehabilitate their historic stone mansion hoping that tourism can provide a livelihood here in the future. Today's highpoint at 1.200 meters and provides a preview of the following days' walk through the national park. In the authentic village of Kosovo our host is a master woodcarver who's happy to showcase his work.



### 3. Kosove – Fir of Hotovo – Borocke

A National Park rich in Fauna, Deep cut Canyons and the Bektashi Faith



⇔ 11 km | ▲ 650 m | ▼ 800 m | ⚡ 5:15 h

Today’s shorter route leaves plenty of time to fully appreciate the natural beauty of the national park. Starting from relative high altitude we steadily climb through farmland into the forest. Here we find the Hotova Fir, a Mediterranean plant relic that vanished elsewhere, and rich fauna including two of Europe’s “Big Three” - the gray wolf and brown bear. At the high point of the entire park at almost 1.500 meters we gain a panoramic overview of the region: Across the valley of Permet runs in parallel the Dhembel ridge, in the North mighty Tomorri’s peaks are followed by Ostrovica’s razor ridge and forming the border with Greece in the East, the Pindus Mountains is snow-covered well into summer. The descent leads right to the ranger station, where we may already meet our host. As a ranger Shaqo can share insights on the national park and talk about his faith, the Bektashi Sufi order.



## 4. Borocke – Ripezave – Malind – Corovoda

Ottoman Bridges, Warm Thermal Springs and Semi-Deserted Villages



⇔ 14.5 km | ▲ 725 m | ▼ 950 m | ⚡ 6:15 h

Up, up from Borocke we climb for a last time towards the ridge, quickly gaining a pleasant overview of the village and last glimpse of the deep-cut canyon. Above us the mountain is almost bare of vegetation but streaked with colorful erosion cones after which locals call it “Ripezave”. Following the crest with views left and right, we pass above the village of Soropull, stop at the reservoir at Kreshova with Mt. Tomorri straight ahead. Across terraced fields the trail drops into a river canyon with bizarre earth and rock formations, a geological spectacle. Following the river bed, we can cool our feet in the small ponds before reaching the end of our hike, where a car picks us up. After a few kilometers on a bumpy piste we reach the confluence of the mountain traveling Osumi River and drive on a new road along the enormous canyon it forms before our last day ends in the small town of Corovoda.

